



Shepherd
OF THE PRAIRIE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Caring For All God's Children

**Congregational
Newsletter**
January 2015

SOTP Statement of Purpose

*"We care for God's children of all ages
by growing disciples who make disciples."*



NEW Member Gathering

Have you been worshipping with us here at Shepherd of the Prairie for a while now and think you would like to learn more about our church or think you might be interested in becoming a member? Please join us at the New Member Gathering on **Sunday, February 8, from 3:00-5:30 p.m.** This will be an opportunity for you to find out more about the life and ministry of our church and to give prayerful consideration to whether or not you want to enter into formal membership in the SOTP family.

Those who desire to become members will be welcomed during the worship services on the following Sunday, February 15. Please call the church office to let us know if you will be participating with us and if you will need child care during the gathering.

Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church
10805 Main St, Huntley, IL 60142 • Phone: 847-669-9448 • Fax: 847-669-9455 • www.sotp.org
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m.-noon, Mon-Fri

A Note From Pastor Mark

Dear Christian Friends,

We are told right at the beginning of John's Gospel that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being." God has always been in control and always will be, no matter what we see happening in our world today.

John was sent to testify to the light, this light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it.

The light spoken of in the Scriptures has many facets: Jesus is the light of the world. His truth lights the way for people to live in peace and joy. Living in the light is a life filled with joy and Godly direction when we submit our lives to Jesus. It is the light that reveals truth to us as we read the Bible. It can be the sudden understanding in a situation that gives us clear leading and direction.

God wants us to have an abundant life. God will meet all our needs, and give us the gifts we need to function and prosper. But we also live in a world filled with darkness and temptations. It is evident that there is a battle between darkness and light, good and evil, going on all around us. As believers we are in the midst of this struggle.

God knows this and God knows us. God understands that although we try, sometimes we simply fail and sin. When we do, our Lord does not wash his hands of us, but holds them out to lift us up. When we make sinful choices we do damage to ourselves and our regrets can run deep.

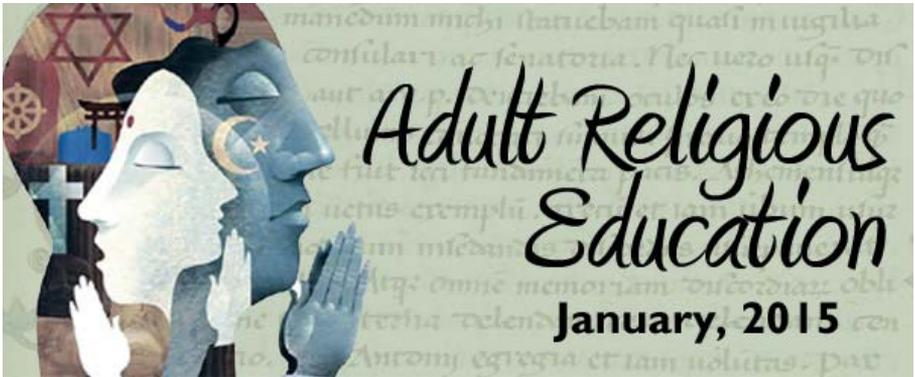
We have a New Year ahead of us.

Our God is a God of understanding and second chances. God sends the light into our lives to reveal truths to us. Let's allow God to do a work in us to begin a fresh new year.

Pastor Mark

Shepherd of the Prairie Annual Meeting

Please mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting of the congregation on **Sunday, January 25**. This is an important meeting and we value input from all who are called as members of the congregation. **We will be meeting immediately following the 10:45 a.m. worship service.** The Annual Report of the church will be available to pick up on the weekend of January 10-11. Please mark your calendars and plan on being with us for this very important gathering.



The Advent wait is over! Christmas joy has come as the angels have sung their "glorias!" In January (on the 6th to be exact) we celebrate the coming of the Wise Men to the infant Jesus, and then, throughout the rest of the Epiphany season, we rejoice at Jesus being the "light of the world no darkness can overcome".

January also brings with it some newness and some changes in adult education. First, the newness. Beginning on January 11th, we'll plunge into the world of the Old Testament prophets, especially the one called Isaiah. Who were these prophets? What were they up to? Were they only predictors of the future as so many have claimed? Or were they more than that--much more? And what did Isaiah say some 2600 years ago that might still speak to us in our age?

Second, more newness. On Sunday, January 18th, at both 9:00 and 10:30, we'll hear a presentation to prepare us for our annual meeting the following week. While this will interrupt our study of the prophets for one week, this is a vitally important meeting so that we can come to the annual meeting well informed.

Third, a change. Beginning in January our adult education schedule will be altered a bit. We'll meet on Sunday morning at 10:30 (this will allow Pastor Bill to worship at 9:00), on Wednesday morning at 11:00, and on Wednesday evening at 6:30. Three times a week. And feel free to move from one session to another as your schedule allows.

The new year always invites us to new beginnings. So here's one you might try: a weekly commitment to adult education! We'd love to have you join us!

Blessings,

Pastor Bill

YOUTH CULTURE NEWS

From The Word...

If you're like most parents, what you hope for is a safe, smooth, and problem-free ride through the years of adolescence with your kids. So why should we actually pray for our teenager's corrupt and sinful nature to rise up and reveal itself while they're still living under our authority and watchful eyes? Why in the world would we ever hope for difficulty???

*“Bring them up
in the discipline
and instruction
of the Lord.”*

—Ephesians 6:4

Think about this: we need to constantly remind ourselves that part of our teenager's makeup (because they are human) is that just like us, they were born with a tendency to sin. In other words, they didn't have to be taught how to do wrong. It comes naturally. The apostle Paul recognizes this reality when he instructs parents to teach their children how to do right by bringing them “up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Sadly, in many Christian homes, kids will often hide their sinful nature through behavioral conformity that doesn't reflect the true condition of their hearts. But if the nuances of their corrupt nature come out when they are young, we have the opportunity to address those heart matters now. If those things are left to rear their ugly heads later in life and our kids don't recognize or know how to deal with them, think about the great troubles and difficulties that will come. Pray that God would reveal your teen's sin issues and tendencies now so that you are able to teach them how to recognize and deal with them, both now and for the rest of their lives. When God answers this prayer it's certainly not easy. But it's important to face and address their sin tendencies now so that you can nurture your teen's heart into a God-honoring adulthood, rather than having to face them later.

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

“I didn't get in when the party started. It's also just primarily time and effort. I find it hard enough in my day-to-day life to give myself a context that's private or removed from constant observation. I want to keep a diary so my grandkids can have it, but I have no interest in publishing it.”

Actor Benedict Cumberbatch, on why he doesn't have a Twitter account

—USA Today,
November 26, 2014



YOUTH CULTURE NEWS

Trends

Alcohol Marketing and College

Parents, this trend should encourage you to have conversations with your teenagers about the pressure to use and abuse alcohol on college campuses. Critics of university policies are now raising awareness regarding the mixed messages being sent to students as a result of the relationship between alcohol and college sporting events. More and more colleges are supplementing their revenues by choosing to sell alcohol at college games, and some are even teaming with the alcohol companies on marketing campaigns. For example, the

University of Louisville has teamed with Maker's Mark Bourbon by selling bottles of bourbon with images of University coaches on the label. Common-sense tells us that students are going to get mixed messages from schools that warn about campus drinking culture, and then turn around and promote alcohol consumption at sporting events. Prepare your kids to make God-honoring choices by helping them spot and respond to the pressure to drink.



Latest Research

Being Cool

If you're a parent, chances are you spent time during your own adolescence working to improve your cool factor. That pressure to be cool still exists for kids in today's world. But new research from the journal *Child Development* gives us a new perspective on cool that we can discuss with our kids. It seems that coolness in the adolescent world eventually fades away. Researchers tracked kids beginning when they were thirteen, continuing through age twenty-three. They found that teens who seemed older

because they wore make-up, had boyfriends or girlfriends, or engaged in delinquent behavior were usually perceived by peers as being cool. But by the time these cool kids had reached the age of twenty-two, they were no longer seen by peers as being cool. In fact, they were seen as less capable of staying in friendships and relationships. Proverbs 31:30 tells us that charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting. Be sure your kids know that cool is fleeting too!

QUICK STATS

- *Underage drinkers are 3x more likely to drink alcohol brands that advertise on TV shows they watch, compared to other alcohol brands. (Boston University and Johns Hopkins University)*
- *81% of U.S. teens and young adult Internet users felt people their age shared too much information online. (Camp Mobile)*

Donna Kelly's Ministry Musings

Happy New Year!! This is the time many of us make resolutions (and try to keep them!). We usually decide to lose 10 pounds, exercise more, spend more time with family; the possibilities are endless. This year I challenge you and myself to look for a new way to share the love of Jesus with our world. Ask yourself, "What is my passion? What excites me? What would I do if I could do any kind of ministry this year?"

Once you have identified your passion, link up with an organization to put that passion into action. This could be through a need here at SOTP (check the "Help Wanted" pages in the announcements for ideas) but don't stop there! There are many opportunities in our community and many people waiting for the love of Christ. Look into helping with the food pantry or volunteering through the school or park districts. Maybe you could help coach a youth sports team or work with scouts. What about volunteering at an assisted living facility or a hospital? Faith in Action is an excellent way to help senior citizens. There are homeless shelters that could use a hand. If you have questions or need ideas let me know and we'll work on your options together.

However and wherever you choose to do ministry, do so with the Holy Spirit and the love of God within you. Anytime you share your love with another person, you are ministering to "the least of these". And remember, we are ALL the least of these!

God bless you in your journey in ministry!

Donna Kelly

WELCA—MARY/MARTHA

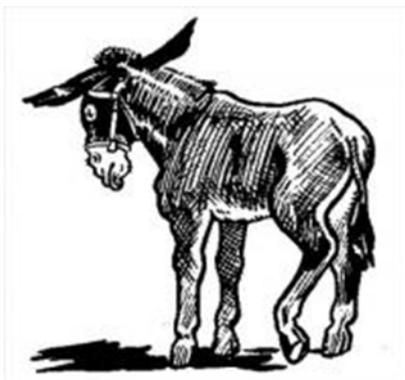


WELCA - MARY MARTHA will meet on **Thursday, January 8, 2015 from 1:00-3:00 p.m.** We will be studying Session 4 from the December issue of the Gather magazine: ***Faith in the Family***, and will recall our own childhood experiences that gave us a sense of trust in God.

All women of the church are invited to participate in this discussion. We hope to increase our numbers, so won't YOU join us for this fellowship?

STEWARDSHIP TALES

“What is your average weekly giving here at Church?” asked a visitor of the Pastor, “I’m a stranger here, but I do want to do my share of giving.” “It’s \$100, sir” answered the Pastor, “we are a very small church and our expenses are very high.” “You sure have some generous givers. They are too rich for me, but I can match it this one time,” said the visitor as he dropped a \$100 bill in the collection plate. The Pastor shook his hand and gave him a big hug. “Hey! Why all this show of gratitude?” asked the visitor. “Stranger, you are the very first person in this church who ever gave our average!” said the Pastor.



PRAIRIE POINT QUILTERS

On the behalf of the Prairie Point Quilters, we'd like to report that through the generosity of the SOTP congregation, we were able to raise \$235.00 with our Fall "Quarters 4 Quilts" campaign! Also, a special Thank You to the SOTP Friends Bible study group for choosing the Prairie Point Quilters for their Christmas Mission. They gave us a generous check for \$60.00.

The proceeds will be used to purchase batting and other needed quilting materials. Thanks so very much for your generosity!

Also, in 2015, Nancy Morbeck along with Harriet Thompson will be leading the PPQ.

Dotty Lucia & Harriet Thompson

WINTER SUPPER CLUB

Once again, , the Senior Shepherds Have posted a yellow sign up sheet for the Winter season Supper Club.

Four (4) times During January 2015 through APRIL 2015 we will be sharing hospitality and food within small groups of 6 to 8 people. Groups are made up from the sign up list. Singles are welcome.

Each group determines what, when and how they will meet. Often one home hosts the main meal while others bring salad, desserts, etc. Some groups decide to “eat out” or “order in” for one or all of their meals it is

(Continued next page)

(Continued from previous page)

up to the folks in that particular small group.

Sign up as soon as you can. Yellow sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Crossroads area. Groups will be determined by mid-January.

For more information or questions please contact Sandy Hupert. Phone 224-569-6041 or E-Mail sandyhupert@gmail.com

MISSION TEAM NEWS

NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK

Another great way to start the New Year. To keep up the tradition that was started a few years ago the Mission Committee has committed 40 servants to the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) for **Saturday, February 14 from 1:00-3:30 p.m.** What a great way to spend some of your Valentine's Day. Maybe either before or after we could plan a lunch or dinner for anyone who is interested. Whatever your interest is, I hope you will strongly consider joining us as we again experience a very rewarding and fulfilling day.

This is for anyone who is 8 years old or older. There is no upper age limit. It is a really neat experience for families and I hope if you have not joined us in the past that you try and fit it into your busy schedule. If you have gone before, thanks, and please sign up again. With our snowbird friends gone we will need all the help we can get.

Please call Sid Sorensen at 224-858-4168 or email sorensensid@comcast.net. We need to have a final count by February 4.

To continue making a difference in God's world, SOTP, through the Mission Team, will contribute \$1,000.00 to various ministries in addition to our Christmas offerings. These ministries are:

- **PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter)** via McHenry County provides emergency shelter from October 1- April 30 for homeless adults and parents with children. It provides a warm meal in the evening and breakfast in the morning. SOTP's donation is \$500.00
- **Habitat for Humanity** in addition to constructing houses has as its mission providing homes and an environment for family growth. SOTP's donation of \$200.00 is to the Northern Fox Valley branch serving Algonquin, Carpentersville, and Elgin.
- The **Elgin Community Crisis Center** provides help and safety for victims of domestic violence as well as providing assistance to others with significant social needs. SOTP's donation is \$300.00

FINANCIAL NEWS

Treasurer's Report

Operating Budget Year-to-Date as of November 30, 2014:

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
General Fund Income:	\$ 485,246.43	\$ 472,395.00
General Fund Expenses:	\$ 465,424.94	\$ 472,373.00
Net Income:	\$ 19,821.49	\$ 22.00

General Fund Notes: Through November, operating revenues exceed expenses. Member contributions continue to exceed budget. Expenses are over budget in the categories headed Facilities, and Office Expenses - Equipment Rental and Web/Software Expenses. Facilities Lawn care/Snow Removal is in excess of budget because of the number of snow events we have had this fiscal year and mulch expense. Overall General Fund Income exceeds Expenses to Budget YTD \$19,821.49 prior to funding Provision Accounts of \$9,500.00. We appreciate the restraint staff and mission teams have shown in their spending in the various expense categories.

Building Fund Year-to-Date as of November 30, 2014:

Building Fund Begin Balance 11/01/2014:	\$ 60,255.25
Debt Reduction Donations	\$ 27,422.75
Building Fund Donations:	\$195,855.56
Mission Plus Interest Income	\$ 492.11
Prepaid Building Fund Donations 2013:	\$ 6,533.40

Loan Principal Payments:	\$ 115,368.95
Loan Interest Payments:	\$ 21,371.05
Principal Only Payments:	\$ 34860.77
Total Building Fund Expenses:	\$ 171,600.77

Ending Fund Balance: \$ 118,958.30

Net Income: \$ 58,703.05

The November month end building loan balance is \$771,666.60. The Finance Committee and I also want to thank the Congregation for your generosity and faithful service to Shepherd of the Prairie and making our financial goals and responsibility achievable.

Jim Henley
SOTP Treasurer

2015 PLEDGE UPDATE

As of December 15, we have received 228 pledges to the General Fund for \$475,559.40 and 173 pledges to the Building Fund for \$198,635.60. Thanks to all who have submitted an Estimate of Giving to SOTP for 2014.

BUILDING FUND UPDATE FOR JANUARY, 2015

Loan Balance	\$759,858.33
Estimated Payoff Date	April, 2020

JANUARY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES

ALTAR GUILD

Saturday 5:00 p.m.

Becky Tuzik & Sue Blotch

Sunday 9:00 a.m. (*setup & take-down*)

January (all)

Marilyn Schnake & Joanne Klinger

Sunday 10:45 a.m. (*take-down*)

January 4

Sandy Hupert & Merrily Burkland

January 11

Jan & Don Koerner

January 18

Donna Schneff & Marlene Boehler

January 25

Pam & Darren Walloch

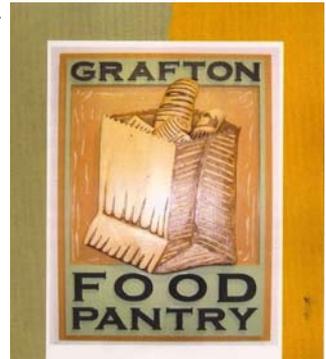
COUNTERS

Warren Brody, Ralph Wehnes, Donna Turner

FOOD PANTRY

SOTP is committed to the Grafton Food Pantry program, which meets the needs of families and individuals who do not have the means to purchase food and other essential items. Food items needed this month:

- Cereal, canned dinners, dry soup, salad dressing, vegetable oil, cake mix, laundry soap.



THANKS!

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, the cards and visits, especially Pastor Mark. Last but not least those who brought us food when I got home. It makes one feel great to get so much support from all of you.

Thank you. Love and peace.

Ferdie Kimminau

January Birthdays

Date

- 1 Caitlin Ross
- 2 Mel Kling, Evan Reincke, Ava Allison
- 3 Vik Bekeris, Phil Casablanca,
Jessica Panella, Gretchen Rossman,
Riley Dobrolinsky
- 4 Mark Miley
- 5 Sandy Petersen
- 6 Nel Quam, Elaine Neukirch,
Denis Minutillo, Jacqueline Petersen
- 8 Liss Kundich, Elizabeth Rojas
- 9 George Sebastian, Aidan Conway,
Michael Parmele
- 11 Bob Broz
- 12 Lanita Palermo, Jack Trevino
- 14 Evelyn Olbrich, Robert Petersen,
Larry Newbanks, Kurtis Arndt
- 15 Joyce Thompson, Dinah Lindsey
- 16 Nancy Zunker, Steve Conway
- 17 Rick Behm, Emilie Ulmer,
Christian Kasal
- 18 Joan Smith, Steven Brown,
Connor Martin
- 19 Jeff McNeal, McKenzie Fulcer,
Elliott Burg
- 20 Loretta Brindell, Pam Luedtke,
Tim Torkelson, Daniel Hibbeler
- 21 Shannon Mejdritch
- 22 Tracy Blanchard, Melody Emery,
Katie Torkelson, Shayne Piskule,
Hailey Trudeau
- 25 Claudia Morgan, Kevin Hennessey
- 27 Marilyn Schnake, Pamela Walloch
- 28 Audrey Schmidt, Bradley James
- 29 Matthew Vitner, Justin Prather,
Brayden Riebock
- 30 Patrick Fleener

Staff and Contacts

Pastor Mark Boster

847-515-2713 (Home)
pastormark@sotpmail.com

Pastor Bill Waxenberg

Director of Adult Education
pastorbill@sotpmail.com

Greg Dowell

Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator
greg@sotpmail.com

Jane McMullen

Director of Music & Worship
jane@sotpmail.com

Dennis Lilla

Technology Support Manager
dennis@sotpmail.com

Donna Kelly

Lay Ministry/New Member Coordinator
donna@sotpmail.com

Michelle Rankin

Office Manager
michelle@sotpmail.com

Michael Waal

Organist/Piano Accompanist
michael@sotpmail.com

Jill Gillming

Little Lambs

Sandy Martin

Cherub Choir

Michael Waal

Blessings Choir

Denise James

Joy Ringers

Michael Parmele

Sunday School Director

Sue Wehnes, Renae Greene

Contributions Secretaries

Tammy Uteg

Music Librarian

Congregation Council

Bob McDuffee, *President*

Kathy McGuine, *Vice President*

Mike McCann, *Secretary*

Jim Henley, *Treasurer*

Adam Adams

Marlene Boehler

Amy Brittain

Larry Newbanks

Wayne Schmidt